

FIRST RECORD OF MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus puffinus*) FOR NEW YORK CITY

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On 9 December 1996, following a two day "noreaster", two seabirds were found dead, but still relatively fresh, on Rockaway Beach, Queens County, New York by Mr. Edward Gormely. They were brought to the American Museum of Natural History and identified as a Dovekie (*Alle alle*) and a Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*). The shearwater (prepared by the author as a study skin

AMNH # 831714), is notable as being the first unequivocal record of this species for New York City.

A shearwater observed from Rockaway Beach on 25 May 1957 by G. Carleton and P. Messing was initially identified as a Manx (Nichols, 1957) but the record was later retracted (Anon.1959). Subsequently Carleton became convinced that the bird was a Manx (Post 1964). Although under perfect conditions, experienced observers may separate Manx, Audubon's and Little shearwaters, equivocal records such as this are not reliable and statements of occurrence should not be based upon them. The late date of the specimen is also notable, the only later state record being from Montauk Point, Suffolk County by A. Lauro on 11 December 1994 (Schiff and Wollin 1995). While the New York City record is not particularly surprising, given the many recent sightings of Manx Shearwaters from the South Shore of Long Island, it is nevertheless an interesting addition to the city's avifauna. Surprisingly the Rockaway Beach bird is only the second state specimen. The first specimen (AMNH # 349273) found on Fire Island, Suffolk County, on 30 August 1917, was noted as the first definite record of this species for North America (Dwight 1923). The status of this species in New York State has changed dramatically since then and even since publication of *Birds of New York State* in 1974 (Bull). This is due mainly to an increase in pelagic birdwatching trips and probably also reflects increased populations in the western Atlantic during the summer months, including a single breeding record from Penikese Island, Massachusetts in 1973 (Bierregaard *et al.* 1975) and a rapidly expanding colony at Middle Lawn Island, Newfoundland, since 1976 (Storey and Lien 1985).

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